

European marine Mollusca: notes on less well-known species

1. *Alvania (Alcidiella) spinosa* Monterosato, 1890

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The present paper is the first in a series which I intend to publish on less well-known European marine Mollusca. These notes will help to clarify certain points of controversy in the literature and also may be regarded as a critical review of some of the recent works by Nordsieck (1968, 1969 and 1972). Sometimes these notes will only serve to refigure and/or redescribe species which are rather rare and known only from one or a few occasions.

This first note is concerned with the species *Alvania spinosa* which was described by Monterosato (1890: 147) with the following diagnosis in Italian:

“Forma distinta del gruppo della *tessellata*, *Philippiana* ecc., ma che porta la sue prominenze spiccate ed in minor numero. Si direbbe che la scultura esagera i caratteri e diminuisce i dettagli. Ogni anfratto ha un solo ordine di spigoli. Pochi ma perfetti esemplari”.

At the same time Monterosato proposed a new section (subgenus) for this species and some related forms which he called *Alcidia*. This name, being preoccupied by *Alcidia* Westwood, 1879, was changed to *Alcidiella* by Cossmann in 1921.

From the diagnosis of Monterosato as cited above it is clear that the

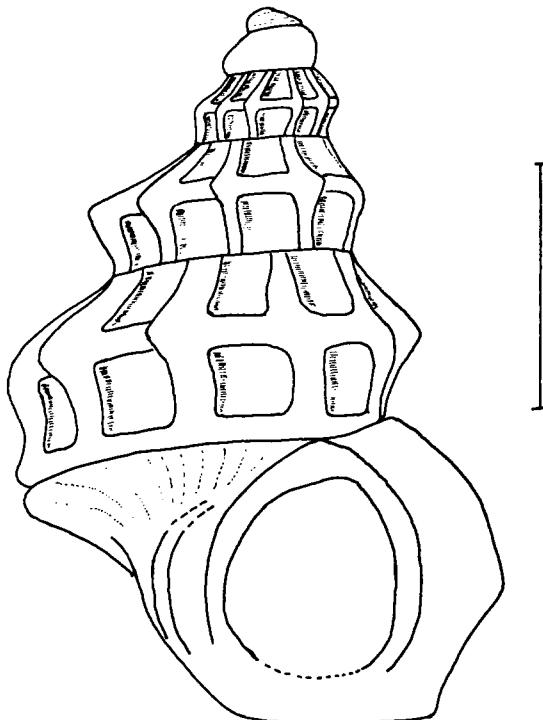


Fig. 1. *Alvania (Alcidiella) spinosa* Monterosato, 1890, specimen from Getares-Algeciras (Spain), J.J. van Aartsen colln. Scale 1 mm.

species *Alvania spinosa* differs from the well-known *Alvania pagodula* (Bucquoy, Dautzenberg & Dollfus, 1884) [= *philippiana* Jeffreys, 1856, non Nyst, 1843] in two respects mainly, viz., there is only one spiral keel on all whorls except for the last one as opposed to *A. pagodula* which has two spiral keels on the lower whorls. Secondly the number of axial ribs in *A. spinosa* is less than in *A. pagodula* and the points of intersection are more strongly marked in *A. spinosa*.

Unfortunately the description of *A. spinosa* by Monterosato was not supplemented by a figure. In fact, there exist only two figures in the literature. The first one was given by Pallary (1902: pl. 1 figs. 12, 13), whereas more recently it was figured by Bellon-Humbert (1973: 101, fig. 32). From both these figures, which correspond exactly with the

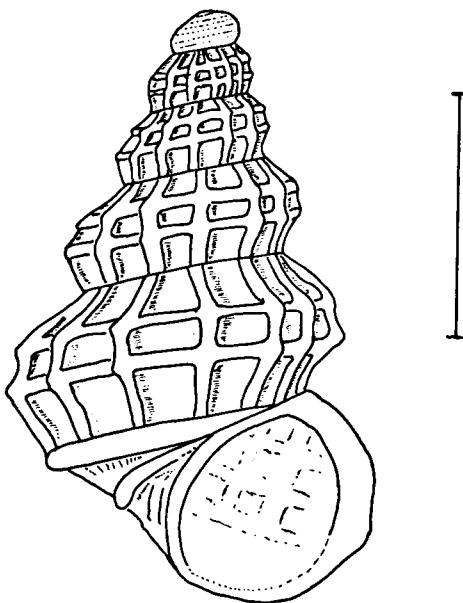


Fig. 2. *Alvania (Alcidiella) pagodula* (B.D.D., 1884), specimen from Mondello (Sicilia, Italy), J.J. van Aartsen colln. Scale 1 mm.

diagnosis of Monterosato, it is evident that the species described and figured by Nordsieck (1972: 177, pl. RVI fig. 7) under the name *A. spinosa* is in fact quite different. It is much smaller, viz., a length of only 1.75 mm as opposed to a length of 3.0 mm as calculated from the figure by Pallary. Furthermore the shell described by Nordsieck does not (or only very slightly) show axial ribs, whereas the real *A. spinosa* has very strong axial ribs. These differences can be appreciated by comparing my fig. 1, which represents a specimen of the real *A. spinosa*, with the figure in Nordsieck.

In fig. 2 an average specimen of *A. pagodula* is shown. Although both species are evidently related they are also clearly different.

A third species of the same group which is of interest here, is *Alvania tessellata* (Schwartz von Mohrenstern MS) (Weinkauff, 1868). This species was published in the book by Weinkauff (1868: 311) with the following diagnosis:

"Testa solida flavido-alba, languida, conico-oblunga; spira gracilis acuminata; anfractus septum valde convexi, carinati sutura profunde divisi, tres primi embryonales unicarinati, ultimus cingulis elevatis tribus (penultimus duobus) costique longitudinalibus 11 – 12 rectis, abbreviatis distincte clathratus, in basi cingulis duobus laevibus instructus; apertura rotundata; labrum subsinuatum, extus varice laevi incrassato ornatum, intus laevigatum.

— Sie ist der *Alvania Philippiana* Jeffreys sehr ähnlich, doch von weit stärkerer Textur und auch grösser. Ihre Länge beträgt 3.3 mm, die Breite 1.8 mm.

Vorkommen an der Küste von Algerien".

Again no figure was given with the description but reference was made to figures to be published by Schwartz von Mohrenstern. This publication, however, did never appear and so there is no published figure of this species in the literature as far as I know.

Monterosato (1884: 61) considers *A. tessellata* to be a variety of *A. pagodula* together with a number of other, mostly undescribed, varieties among which is one named *major-scabrida*, also originating from Alger.

From the description given by Weinkauff and after comparing a number of specimens which I obtained myself from different localities on the Algerian coast in the vicinity of Alger, I am inclined to think that most probably the large form of *A. pagodula* which is found there should be called *Alvania pagodula* (Bucquoy, Dautzenberg & Dollfus, 1884) var. *tessellata* (Weinkauff, 1868), and that this form is most probably identical with the var. *major-scabrida* Monterosato, 1884 MS. This is notwithstanding the fact that Monterosato himself in an earlier paper on the Mollusca from Alger (1877: 34) states

"Je n'ai point trouvé, dans l'envoi, la forme que Schwartz a nommé *Alvania tessellata* et dont le type est d'Alger".

This statement of Monterosato is given under the heading *Rissoa Lanciae Calc.* = *R. Philippiana* Jeffreys.

A figure of a specimen which I consider to be this variety is given as fig. 3 for comparison. This specimen corresponds exactly with specimens in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History) in London under no. 1911.10.26.21816-21825. There are two labels with this lot. One reads: "*Rissoa tessellata* (Schw.) = *Philippiana* Jeffr. = *pagodula* BDD. Algier, M. Joly." The other label says " = *R. Lanciae Calcara*". It can be seen that this shell is essentially *A. pagodula* but

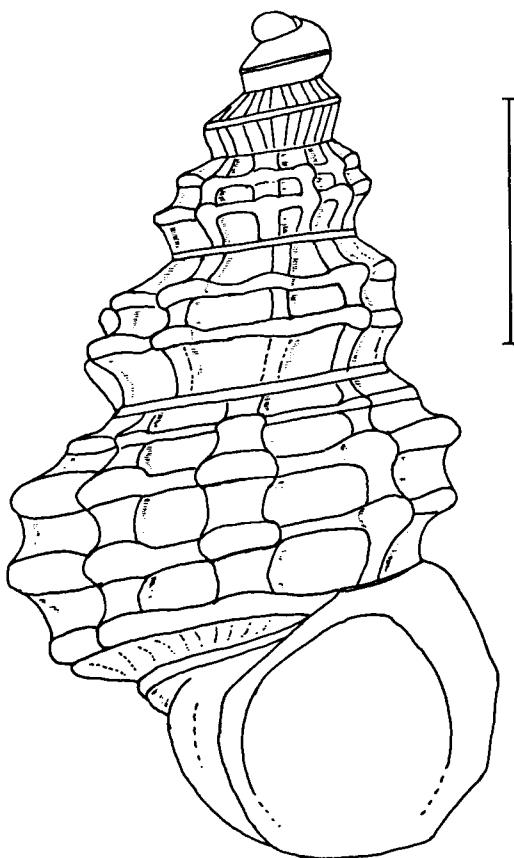


Fig. 3. *Alvania (Alcidiella) pagodula* var. *tessellata* (Weinkauff, 1868), specimen from Sidi Ferruch (Algeria), J.J. van Aartsen colln. Scale 1 mm.

much larger than usual and having a more pronounced sculpture. The differences in my opinion, however, warrant only a varietal name and not separation as a species.

It should be noted that there is no affinity between *A. pagodula* var. *tessellata* and the real *Alvania lanciae* (Calcaro, 1841). The statement inferring *tessellata* to be a form (variety) of *Alvania lanciae* given by Nordsieck (1972: 192) is most probably based on the paper of Monterosato of 1877. However, a careful study of this and later papers

by Monterosato makes it perfectly clear that this author in 1877 used the name *A. lanciae* for the shell which we now usually call *Alvania pagodula*.

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